

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KUWAIT 002452

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, NEA/ARP, NEA/PPD, PA, INR/NESA,  
IIP/G/NEA-SA, INR/B  
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE  
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH, PARIS FOR O'FRIEL  
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA  
CINCCENT FOR CCPA  
USDOC FOR 4520/ANESA/ONE/FITZGERALD-WILKS  
USDOC FOR ITA AND PTO/OLIA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KU](#) [KDMR](#)

SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION, MAY 29-JUNE 4: TERRORISM; DE-  
BAATHIFICATION; ROAD MAP PEACE PLAN; IRAQ

SUMMARY: Wire services report that a Kuwaiti court sentenced Sami al-Mutairi to death on June 4 for the January 21, 2003 murder of American civilian military contractor Michael Pouliot. Two other men were each sentenced to three years in prison for providing the weapons used in the attack, with a third sentenced in absentia for training al-Mutairi in the use of the weapons.

Liberal commentary on terrorism continues to emphasize the necessity of social, political and economic change to combat terrorism. In sharp contrast, an ultra-conservative commentator sees the US-led war on terror as "terrorism" against Muslims, and demands "that our governments not comply with or respond to such slogans, and take care of combating terrorism ourselves."

One writer rails against any relations with the "Zionist entity," and argues that without Jihad, "Palestine will be lost." A liberal commentator argues that many Baath party members joined the party out of necessity and should not be excluded from the task of rebuilding Iraq.

One prominent daily reports that an ongoing investigation by Saudi and Kuwaiti authorities may link Kuwaitis to the bombings of three Western housing compounds on May 13. END SUMMARY.

12. News Stories: On June 4, a Kuwaiti court sentenced Sami al-Mutairi to death for the murder of American civilian military contractor Michael Pouliot on January 21, 2003, and the attempted murder of Pouliot's colleague. Two other men were each sentenced to three years in prison for providing the weapons used in the attack, with a third sentenced in absentia for training al-Mutairi in the use of the weapons.

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports on June 1 that Kuwaiti police have apprehended two Kuwaitis suspected of belonging to Al-Qaeda as part of the investigation into the Riyadh terrorist bombings. On June 2, the paper reports that one of the Riyadh suicide attackers may have been a Kuwaiti member of Al-Qaeda and that DNA testing will be used to verify whether this is the case.

On June 1, Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that a Kuwaiti National Guardsman protecting the US Embassy "lost control of his weapon" and discharged four rounds during his guard shift. He was immediately apprehended and taken in for questioning. (Note: as media report notes, incident appears to have been an accident.)

On May 30, Al-Watan front-pages Secretary Rumsfeld's Wall Street Journal op/ed, "Core Principles for a Free Iraq."

A Member of Parliament accuses the government of allocating KD 50 million (approx. USD 150 million) to support Parliamentary candidates loyal to the government and to defeat Islamist candidates in the July National Assembly election, Al-Qabas and Al-Seyassa report on their June 1 front pages.

All newspapers report on June 2 that a decree by the Amir has officially set the date of the Parliamentary elections for July 5, 2003.

Al-Anba and Al-Qabas report on June 1 that the Minister of Communications has given marine companies 72 hours to submit their proposals on how to solve the problem of unloading shipments in Kuwaiti ports that are "overcrowded by US ships." Sources indicate the Council of Ministers will also discuss the issue.

In a poll of 300 citizens, 98% of respondents said that the Arab League is a failure, Al-Anba front pages on May 31.

Editorials:

13. "The Baath Party"

Liberal Mohammad Musa'ed Al-Saleh wrote in independent Al-Qabas (6/01): "During Saddam's rule, many Iraqi citizens were forced to join the Baath party. Consequently, the American-British rulers of Iraq should not consider all Baathists to be their enemies. The American decision to let go those Ministry and army employees that were members of the Baath party will create a crisis for the American and British occupation authorities. If they are sincere in their temporary occupation, they must involve all competent Iraqis in running the country."

14. "To Not Lose Our Path to Palestine"

Essam Al-Fulaij wrote in independent Al-Watan (5/29): "We must stress that we should not give up the Palestinian territories. [O]ur conflict with the Jews is a cultural-ideological conflict. Resisting normalization with the Jewish enemy is very important for the Jews are the Umma's [Muslim nation's] primary enemy. Jihad is the only option we have as otherwise we will lose Palestine."

15. "How Can We Regain the Initiative?"

Dr. Sadeq Al-Bassam wrote in independent Al-Seyassah (6/3): "The impotence of Arab and Islamic regimes has led some young men to adopt new alternatives to end the feeling of humiliation which has hit the Arab world. Confronting violence with violence will only generate fire that could engulf everything. We have to work on regaining the initiative in combating terrorism by allowing the people to participate in political, economic and social decisions. Moreover, the governments must also allow more freedom and respect of other opinions and to distribute its fortunes equally among people instead of distributing it to certain people in the regime."

16. "Terrorism In the War Against Terrorism"

Islamist Salafi Dr. Wael Al-Hassawi wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (6/3): "The war on terrorism led by the great power nations against small countries has increased the agitation of people in many countries of the world and led them to adopt the policy of violence. Muslims around the world receive the greatest share of blame [for terrorism] and are most often detained. The simplest thing we can do in our country is to demonstrate that we reject this unjust war [against terrorism] and to demand that our governments not comply with or respond to such slogans, and take care of combating terrorism ourselves."

17. "Religious Media: A New Joke"

Liberal Political Science professor, Dr. Ahmed Al-Baghdadi wrote in independent Al-Seyassa (6/2): "It is not the right of the Minister of Information to make his ministry a tool of the religious [Islamist] current due to his personal relations with this group. It is the Minister's duty to make television and radio programs suitable to all orientations, tastes, and views. The Minister is therefore blatantly biased when he allows all programs, religious or non-religious, to go according to Islamists' mood swings. He should be held responsible for exploiting official media for the benefit of one sector of society-- namely, Islamic groups who are not even related to Islam, but represent their own interests."